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HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

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EIGHT-HOUR MOVEMENT

BY LEMUEL DANRYID.

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HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE EIGHT-HOUR MOVEMENT.

By LEMUEL DANRYID.

The annual report of the Commissioner of Labor of the United States for 1886 furnishes material for very serious reflection to all who have an interest in the prosperity of the people. The fact has been apparent for some time that all the great nations of Europe, with the United States, were developing manufactures far beyond the power of home consumption, with a million able-bodied men here in enforced idleness, and a similar percentage abroad, and that in all alike a period of depression had been fairly entered, which rendered the producing classes more miserable, their future darker, their strength sooner exhausted through increase of tension, and consequently danger to the State more imminent. "If each of these great communities," remarks the Commissioner, "has reached an industrial condition involving phases common to all, there must be somewhere a line of reason for such universal condition, and one should be able to develop the logical course of events which has brought such a wide range of States to an industrial epoch." Let ours be the task to follow the guiding hand of history and philosophy, and see if we cannot reach this desired end.

The United States already prides itself on being the great commercial rival of England, and France has so increased her productive capacity within recent years that she also no longer finds the home market adequate for consumption, and seeks abroad for new colonies to prevent

more serious disaster at home from her unemployed proletaires. Germany, intoxicated with the immense sum drawn from France after the Franco-Prussian war, stimulated the speculative fever to the highest pitch, overstocked itself with machinery and manufacturing plant, and now is looking abroad for an outlet for the surplus. Belgium has also increased the limit of production. Holland finds her great public works completed and international communication well established. Italy and Spain, slowly awakening from their slumber of centuries to realize the needs of the moment, have their great railway arteries meeting all demands, yet capital annually yields a smaller revenue. Austria and Turkey have as many roads as business requires, and manufactures there, as elsewhere, are the only means left for investment amid general depression and inability to increase consumption, to day the great desideratum of all manufacturing nations.

The high-tariff act of Germany in 1879, to "promote manufacturing enterprise," led to similar measures in Russia, Italy, Austria, Turkey, and even Switzerland, thus having the double effect of increasing domestic competition and restricting export trade. Russia, not content with fighting for midland Asia and watching her chance to reach the Dardanelles, is busy at home making it unpleasant for Prussians, who have largely invested their capital there in mining production. Yet in all these coun-

tries millions are toiling exhaustively long hours, and other millions plead in vain but for a similar boon!

Great Britain and Belgium, retaining their low-tariff policies, yet finding themselves similarly circumstanced, it cannot be said that our quadrennial political bugaboo of the "tariff question" has caused this wide-spread, international depression; both free-trade and protective countries are alike suffering, none from their pet commercial system deriving advantages over another, for the Commissioner says:

"All these nations now find themselves in sympathy in their distress, all seeking outlets for their surplus productions. The scale of wages for the countries named is according to the following order, the highest first: United States, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany. It is difficult to connect commercial systems with this scale of wages, and when the broad view is taken that each of these countries has overstocked itself with machinery and manufacturing plant far in advance of the wants of production, and when it is considered also that the present period of industrial depression is unique in its character, as not having been attended with financial and commercial crises and panics, financial matters having only been incidentally involved; and when it is considered further that the condition of these nations has been reached under both free-trade and protective policies and under a wide range of tariff restrictions, it is readily seen that the family of nations given to mechanical production has reached an epoch in its existence, and that commercial systems which might have been at one time or under some circumstances necessities, are now apparently only expedients, to be used temporarily and not as permanent features of national progress. * * * If all the producing nations of the world succeed in supplying themselves with manufactured products, as they are so largely doing, and in many cases have succeeded in doing, and then all seek relief, which comes from selling their surplus products at low rates to their neighbors, the world has indeed reached an industrial epoch, and governmental policies and the rules of political economy *must be changed* to meet the new conditions resulting from the arrival of a novel industrial period."

From these grave and official conclusions, so plainly put, we may draw the following deductions:

1. All the great manufacturing nations of the world are involved in similar industrial distress, and proceeding from the same causes.

2. The question of high or low tariff has not entered as a determining cause thereof.

3. That the scale of wages in the countries mentioned is graduated very nearly the same, as efforts have been made therein to shorten the hours of labor.

4. That neither "governmental policies"

nor "political economy" are able to meet the new requirements.

5. That the crying evil in each country is not want of productive power, but the lack of consumptive ability; in other words, it is the old problem stated by Carlyle: "thirty thousand idle needle-women in London and millions of shirtless backs!"

The question then is how to increase consumption, and thus furnish not only increased production, but a happier and more contented people.

We have forever passed out of those phases of national life when forms of faith or forms of government divided cabinets and peoples into hostile camps. The heavy tones of dogmatic dispute and the valiant defenders of divine right and representative government no longer claim the public ear. These are recognized as issues outgrown, and to discuss them now is but to thresh last century's straw. The great issues of this century, on the contrary, have been distinctly economic. And nowhere has this been more manifest than is to be seen in the history of the short-time movement. It stands forth on both sides of the Atlantic as a herald of peace, offering the olive branch of hope to both contending factions in the industrial warfare the ever upward progress of man has bequeathed to our century. Even as the century opened, with a wide-spread militancy regnant in Europe, the peaceful spirit of its antagonist, industrialism, was surging to the front.

Space will permit but a mere epitome of the historical events incorporated in the course of this movement for less hours, which already fills several volumes. Many still deem the movement in America of recent growth, but as far back as 1806 we have an authenticated instance of organized ship-builders and caulkers in New York City asking for a reduction from fourteen to ten hours a day. Unlike the movement then assuming headway in England,

this was not a plea for women and children only, but a sturdy demand for themselves. Their employers were astounded at such a demand, and with solemn indignation the merchants of New York resolved that such a trade "combination has a direct tendency to put their business into other hands, or to seriously injure it by reducing ship-owners to repair their vessels elsewhere rather than submit to the inconveniences, delays and vexations to which they would be exposed when they can obtain labor only at such times and on such conditions as the folly and caprice of a few journeymen mechanics may dictate, who are now idle two or three of the most valuable hours of the day." Whereupon these patriotic merchants, who deemed the achievement of political liberty the term of social progress, determined to black-list every member of the union audaciously asking for a reduction of the hours of labor from fourteen to ten. Several years passed before marked success attended the sporadic efforts which followed. In Boston, May, 1832, the carpenters and caulkers struck for ten hours and lost, but in that and the year following the same trades were successful in New York and Philadelphia.

After this the movement for ten hours became so general that in April, 1840, President Van Buren by proclamation established ten hours as the normal work day in all navy yards and arsenals of the government. This gave it such standing that in the following year Governor Fort of New Jersey recommended shortening the hours of daily labor in his message, seeing even then that "constant and unremitting toil prevents intellectual improvement and leads to physical and moral debasement." Labor parties had already arisen in the Eastern States, in which this measure occupied a prominent plank. In the same year, 1841, the ten-hour system was introduced in Bath, Me., by a firm of

boat-builders, and most of the yards there followed the example.

From this time on the movement steadily gained headway in the large cities among skilled artisans, though not in the mills. On June 16, 1845, a large mass meeting, attended by 5,000 persons, was held at Pittsburgh, Pa., for the same purpose, and led to similar action elsewhere. In the following October the first industrial convention in this country was convened at New York to organize concerted action toward the same end. Mass meetings and strikes for the ten-hour system now became very frequent, and in many cases were successful. The European uprising in 1848 naturally gave the movement greater impetus, and the walls of the old "cradle of liberty," Faneuil Hall, again echoed to the new spirit of a new age. From 1848 onward Congress and Legislatures were annually in receipt of petitions and memorials against the employment of women and children over ten hours a day in factories, but then, as so many times later, they were buried in committees. But the system was gradually gaining ground, and the old fourteen-hour stretch found but few defenders. Little by little hours had fallen to twelve and eleven where the ten-hour system had not yet prevailed.

Another industrial convention met at Chicago, June, 1850, to further solidify the growing demand. Such persistency was not without effect, and by 1853 eleven hours became the general custom for artisans. In some places factories still ran for more hours, but by 1865 strikes had brought eleven hours as the general maximum in factories.

After the close of the Civil War the return of such large numbers to industrial pursuits again brought the question up and intensified the antagonism between industrialism against the spirit of militancy, which our late war did so much to revive and encourage. Hardly was the struggle

of arms over and its veterans back to peaceful pursuits than the New England Ten-Hour League was organized, which by the eloquent voice of Wendell Phillips and others proclaimed the new gospel. Owing to this agitation the State of Massachusetts in 1874 adopted the ten-hour law despite the combined opposition of mill owners and political economists. Although until recently Massachusetts stood alone in reducing factory labor to ten hours, official investigation in 1881 shows that the Massachusetts factory laborer working over twenty hours less per month than his fellows of adjoining States, received about two dollars and a half more wages in that time than they. Experience had demonstrated the same fact here as investigation had shown in the Departments at Washington, viz.: that the clerical errors made in the last hour of the day occupied more time the next day in correction than the extra hour was worth. From this time on events are familiar to us all and need no repetition where space is limited.

In England the first factory bill was passed in Parliament in 1802, limiting the labor of apprentices to twelve hours per day, and providing for their instruction in reading and writing. But as the possibilities of the application of steam increased the cries of the poor drudges appealed deeper to philanthropic minds. The factory system in aggregating labor made its baneful effects more glaring. In 1815 Sir Robert Peel, father of the law of 1802, again came to the front and proposed an inquiry "into the expediency of applying the apprentice act to children of every description." For four years the contest waged, and in 1819 a law was passed making such extensions partially and also prohibiting the employment of "Britons, who will never be slaves," under *nine* years of age, and limiting all under sixteen years to twelve hours a day. Several amendments were subsequently adopted strengthening

its provisions, and in 1825 a still further reduction was made in certain industries to eleven and one half hours a day.

Every reduction in working hours being marked with such palpable benefit both to the toiler and community, and dismal economic prophesies so quickly exploded, in 1829 a "Short-time Committee" was organized at Manchester and the struggle organized systematically. As a consequence in 1831 a bill was introduced proposing a reduction to eleven hours a day, and raising the requisite age of minors in factories to eighteen years. It was only partially successful, being finally limited to the cotton industry. But the friends of the movement were not inactive, and in 1833 another reduction for all women and minors in manufacturing establishments to ten hours was passed. The result was that the bill was extended to cover all textile industries, except silk, upon the eleven-hours basis of the 1831 act and minors' hours reduced to eight with two hours' schooling a day. The agitation grew with each new victory, and in 1839 the government was defeated in opposing the extension of the act to silk mills.

From 1840 the short-time movement took a wider scope than textile industries. The moans of the children in the mines and elsewhere could not remain unheard. In 1844 children's hours were reduced to half-time with half-time schooling; but the crowning success came in 1847 in the adoption of the ten-hour law, thus, within thirty years, reducing the hours of labor for children, under thirteen, from sixteen to five hours a day; and for women and minors between thirteen and eighteen years of age from sixteen to ten hours a day. So great was the benefit derived in the elevation socially and greater industrial capacity of the English worker that in 1874, when continental competitors were working from eleven to fourteen hours a day, England further reduced the working time

to nine and a half hours per day. England was not afraid to rest her manufacturing greatness upon better-fed and better-rested workers as against the ill-fed and degraded competitors of foreign lands, nor will she rest here.

In March, 1856, the stonemasons in Australia adopted the eight-hour system with the concurrence of their employers, and without the aid of legislation; the men submitting to a reduction of 14 per cent. This action was speedily followed by the other building trades, and mechanics and artisans of various kinds and callings, so that within one month the new system was uniformly adopted. Since then the 21st of April has been annually celebrated there in commemoration of this event. As a result the fundamental principle of the short-time advocates—that wages rise as hours are shortened—has been signally indicated, for wages have been increased from 46 to 100 per cent. over what they were before the adoption of the eight-hour system.

The English agitation in the forties spread to France and Belgium, and has greatly strengthened the trade-union spirit, and hours of labor there are now generally eleven per day.

Such very briefly, is a sketch of the movement for emancipation from exhaustive toil, which began with the century in a moan, and has already assumed the proportions of a vociferous demand, and a constantly increasing serried front. Its international magnitude precludes the possibility of danger by its adoption here for the increased activity thereby given to production, as in Australia and England, and the greater industrial capacity of the workers will defy competition.

The short-time movement has a philosophy as well as a history. Comte and Spencer have both elaborately demonstrated that the growth of freedom and the

increase of the feeling of individual worth have been results of the ever increasing domination of industrialism over militancy, and that no effort of human Cæsars, though they might for a time turn nations into war and mourning, has been effectual in stemming the tide of progress that proclaimed human rights as above things. The old civilizations looked with contempt on the proletariat as a servile class. The laws of social growth show that in entering upon an industrial period of activity the so-called "working class" constitutes the body of society, and that the various classes which so arrogantly exalt themselves are but the organs of and draw their vitality from the body they affect to despise. Social health, *i. e.*, freedom to the exercise of normal functions, must be established in the social body to radiate outward on every nerve and thrill every organ and limb to have harmonious action.

In history, the record of human activity, we find the silver thread which has through devious ways and winding labyrinths ever led on to the higher plane man enjoys in the present. Warfare of conquest first knit and cemented into the social mass the divergent interests and rival claims of tribes and peoples. Under conquest arose the institution of slavery by which came accumulation of wealth and the entailed habits of steady application. Then followed warfare of defence as the expression of the active functions of man, involving a further and freer growth of industry, the mitigation of slavery into serfage, an augmentation of the sense of solidarity and complexity in the social organization. The communes destroyed feudalism in the Middle Ages and were the herald of the Third Estate and free labor, wherein warfare, aggressive and defensive, was to be gradually replaced by warfare upon nature, the industrial phrase of social activity, a phrase definitely entered by civilization since the epoch of 1789.

In modern industry, therefore, we may assert is to be found the key to the social problems of the day, and order will be seen to be best maintained where the laws governing the normal development of industry as a social function are most clearly seen, and freest scope given. The progress of man has shown an unceasing struggle between militancy and industrialism, in which each epoch has been marked by the growth of the latter. Military chieftains ever sought by the use of the sword to found a dynasty, to protect a royal policy or to secure some new privilege, but they have ever been powerless to prevent a growing diversification of industry, and in the increased freedom demanded for its display coercive restrictions have been weakened. When the sword necessarily ceased to represent and defend social interests, industrial chiefs replaced the warriors. But in grasping power and hedging it about with privileges unavailing to the laborer, they became imbued with the militant spirit and possessed no social aim; hence, we have a new feudalism in which the "boss" replaces the baronial lord. Because of this long warfare between the contending spirits of Militancy and Industrialism have arisen the revolutions of the past few centuries. Militancy, whether in church, or state, or shop, rests upon coercion, institutions, vested privileges; Industrialism craves peaceful evolution, co-operation, equal opportunities. The first, for this reason, seeks stability in deep-rooted systems which in time become barriers to progress; the second looks forward to larger liberty, greater opportunities and more cordial co-operation.

The artisan has replaced the mailed knight as the true exponent of the interests of modern civilization; instead of warlike depredations upon and exploitation of our fellows, modern social life bestows the chief merit upon peaceful warfare and exploitation of nature. And it is because

the line of progress has marked this course that it is that the aspirations of the toiler, of the great, beating popular heart, wedded to the paths of peace as the philosophy of history demonstrates; the cry of the producers, half articulate though it may often be now that we have passed the theocratic and monarchic forms of society into an industrial age, wherein social economics constitute the burning questions of the hour;—that the demand for less hours of manual toil becomes indicative of social progress and a harbinger of a higher civilization.

Nor in this discussion need we confine ourselves to philosophical generalizations, for historical events characterizing the movement furnish us abundant material to substantiate these conclusions. Instead of, as in the past, looking to political legislation for economic results, it is for the higher co-operative social unity to demand for themselves the boon which the spirit of progress has unceasingly whispered to their souls. What some of these corroborations are may be briefly stated as follows:

ECONOMICS DEMAND IT.—Not the political economy of the day, for that is but an *art*, not a *science*, a set of formulated rules of existing conditions continually fluctuating and changing, but a social economy, which sees the scientific laws by which the production and distribution of wealth should be pursued to secure the largest amount of happiness and comfort and the highest development of all. The social province is one wrested from nature, involving relations superimposed upon natural laws and recognizing social instincts of which man in a state of nature knows nothing.

Political economy presents us with its natural laws as of old, and renews the deceptive promise with which it entered the French Revolution, that their liberty would make earth a paradise. We are still presented with the old formulas which never explained anything, but merely restated in

general and vague terms the facts they were supposed to analyze. Its laws are but the record of observed phenomena, and they will remain "laws" only so long as privilege grants charters to personal selfishness to exploit the weak. Whenever the prevailing motives which determine men shall cease to be operative, that moment these economic laws are abrogated. It formulates existing conditions, and its laws of supply and demand, of profits and of wages, and the other learned expositions made by these economists, are mere resultant, not causative, statements. Society has again and again been based on motives for action radically different from those of to-day, as it will be again. Fred-eric Harrison has somewhere compared our Malthusian economics to a pretended science of the stomach independent of the nervous system or knowledge of the circulation of the blood. While claiming to be governed by scientific precision they from the outset raise their formulas of modes of social existence into abstract laws governing the observed phenomena. To be really a science economics must be based upon social evolution and be in accord with social progress.

The evolution of the proletariat from slavery and serfage left the scale of wages at the subsistence line. It is the cost of living rather than the long number of hours employed which has ever determined the standard of remuneration for labor. "The natural and necessary rate of wages," of which we so often hear, is such a rate as will supply, to use the words of Adam Smith, "Not only the commodities that are absolutely indispensably necessary for the support of life, but whatever the custom of the country renders it indecent for creditable people, even of the lowest order, to be without."

The cost of subsistence for an average family determines the rate below which wages cannot well fall, and above which

the enforced idleness of about six per cent. of the workers in all manufacturing nations tends to prevent it rising. Women's wages are always lower, because custom has not made others generally dependent upon them in like degree. Wages have been and will be regulated by existing conditions of living, and whatever tends to raise "the standard of decency and comfort" will inevitably affect the standard of wages. Therefore, the great problem is not so much to increase production in an overstocked market as to increase consumption and thus enlarge the demand.

In 1444 the rate of wages in England varied from two to four pence a day, but the price of board was only one and a half pence. The rise of free cities, the constant disintegration of feudalism, the growing demand for skilled labor, with the rise and growth of guilds, tended to raise the standard of comfort. Though for centuries constant wars and legislative interference did much to check this upward tendency, it still remains true that real and nominal wages have advanced as interference ceased, and the standard of comfort was raised and engrafted into national customs. Historically, then, long hours have ever tended to lower the standard of living and, consequently, of wages. It is but a truism to point out that the greater the wants of the humblest toiler the higher the standard below which custom regards it indecent for him to live, the greater will be his consumptive capacity; and that with this increase there must necessarily be greater demand for production. It is also an axiomatic truth that the productive power of man is ever in excess of his consumptive power, and that instead of regulating production by *rules* which limit it to the requirements of artificially repressed consumption, it should be the duty of economic *science* to increase the latter, and thus indefinitely augment production and wealth, and secure its more equitable dis-

tribution by continually elevating the standard of comfort.

Therefore, we may conclude that a science of economics would see in the lessening of the hours of labor increased consumption, a vaster display of productive activity, a higher intellectual and moral development of the toiler, a wider demand for the more artistic products of our factories, an immense stimulus afforded to inventive genius, a more thorough organization of industrial functions and an almost fabulous increase of national prosperity and wealth no longer based on individual misery and want, and all proceeding *pari passu* with higher wages.

HUMANITY DEMANDS IT--The now general struggle for a reduction of the hours of labor is one for a wider civilization. Civilization, resting upon the solidarity of human welfare, demands a prosperous and contented people, with increased needs and means to supply them. To refuse aid to willing hands, to cultivate our idle lands, to import laborers of a race imbruted by centuries of oppression and servility, that thereby the cost of living may be reduced to a far lower standard and a lower level for all be reached, to insist upon long hours of toil, are all deadly blows at the very foundation of modern civilization, for it debases and degrades humanity; it is brutal devolution backward instead of social evolution forward. A decrease in the hours of labor means rest, and rest is invariably accompanied by increased wants. Release the poor drudge in the mine or the factory from his long hours of scantily requited toil, and give him daily hours of relaxation and leisure with an army of additional toilers and you at once raise him in the social scale. Rest cultivates; exhaustive drudgery brutalizes.

The history of the short-time movement proves that every reduction of the hours of labor heretofore made has elevated not only the workers, but social relations; that

increased leisure has inevitably introduced new wants, has added to the necessities of life, and has improved the sanitary condition of the people. At the opening of the century, when the factory system was forming, Thorold Rogers estimates the condition of the factory operatives as even lower than that of the agricultural laborer. In 1802, as we have seen, Sir Robert Peel, one of the largest cotton manufacturers in England, showed his statesmanship in introducing the first of British Factory Acts. In 1816, in a speech, he made use of these words:

"The hours of work allowed by that bill being fewer in number than those formerly practiced, a visible improvement in the health and general appearance of the children soon became evident, and since the complete operation of the act contagious disorders have rarely occurred."

The setting apart of one day in seven for rest wherein no man ought to labor, is a prime factor in the growth of civilization. We never hear the charge that wage workers receive seven days' pay for six days' work, simply because conscientious conviction has become hardened into national custom. Yet people have to live on the Sabbath, and often do so better, but the cost of sustenance--what will support a family, not what equity or social decency actually requires--is the test by which the week's standard of wages is determined. For once the social and the political economists agree, and the question arises, Should not eight hours a day, like six days a week, become firmly fixed as a general custom, hardened into national habit? Are not the interests and welfare of humanity identical in both cases?

When the agricultural laborers in certain counties of England, under the inspiration of Arch and his colleagues, secured additional hours of rest, but a short period was needed to see a marked improvement in their social condition. Flowers began to blossom around their cottage walls, dilapidated fences and

broken gates were mended, the shrubbery more neatly tended and the garden more carefully cultivated. Inside of these humble dwellings, where the laborer had formerly entered at the conclusion of a long day's work only to throw his wearied body down to senseless slumber, articles of comfort began to come in; a carpet replaced the scraped sand it may be on the floor, curtains to the windows and pictures upon the wall added a home feeling which did much to awaken the dormant manliness of its occupants. With increased comforts came increased wants; increased wants and a higher vigor brought increased cultivation, and, hence, a higher standard of wages than on the continent where the hours of labor remained from twelve to sixteen per day.

Even those who at first bitterly denounced all efforts to lessen factory toil as revolutionary and destructive of "the natural degrees of society," under the lessons of experience were becoming convinced that less hours meant not only higher wages, but improved sanitary, social and moral relations. Official reports show that within a single decade it was rare to find an operative under twenty years of age unable to read and write. Diseases incidental to factory labor disappeared, and there was an almost entire absence of deformity specific to that work; wages increased from twelve to forty per cent., and with the rise of consumption of products the production of textile fabrics largely increased. From 1844 to 1858 the commerce of Great Britain doubled and increased more than twice as fast as the population, which before this it hardly kept pace with it. From 1840 to 1870 the proportion of the adult population who could read and write increased thirty-five per cent. faster than the population, while the number of children attending public schools increased several hundred per cent. With increased knowledge has followed lectures on science

and art in large manufacturing centres, and public gardens and museums have offered new inducements to the once despised worker. In the words of an English writer, "refinement and civilization only take their date from the possession of the privileges which restricted labor conferred upon the people." Such prominent opponents in Parliament as J. A. Roebuck, Sir James Graham, Sir Thomas Bazley, the late and most vindictive John Bright, and others, all lived to recant their dismal forebodings.

Here history and philosophy agree that less hours of toil has been strictly within the lines of industrial progress, and so far from being an aggressive war upon social interests, is the truest exponent of the demands of modern industrialism for a broader civilization and a far higher humanity.

LABOR-SAVING MACHINERY DEMANDS IT.—"Every society," says Proudhon, "in which the power of insurrection is suppressed is a society dead to progress; there is no truth of history better proven." In economic society there has been for over a century, since the inventions of Arkwright and Watts, an insurrection going on against division of labor with unparalleled results. Machinery, that new Frankenstein with its iron nerves and muscles, has rendered labor cheaper by aggregating it, products have become more abundant and wealth more diffused. There can be no doubt but that since our civil war, invention has far outstripped the demand for human labor, and hundreds of thousands have had to crowd into other avocations or join the army of the "superfluous" mendicants, criminals and tramps. The National Labor Bureau (1886) presents us with the following statistics illustrating this displacement:

"The displacement of muscular labor by machinery has been, in recent years: In agricultural implements, 50 per cent.; small arms, 44 to 49; fire brick, 40; boots and shoes, 50 to 80; brooms, 50; saws, 60; silk, 40; soap, 50; woolen goods, 25 to 50; metals and metallic goods, 10 to 15;

carpets, 15 to 1; clothing, 6 to 1; hats, 9 to 1; cotton goods, 3 to 1; mining, 6 to 1; paper, 15 to 1; wall paper, 100 to 1."

"Certainly," remarks the Commissioner, "to the men individually employed, the displacement has been severe indeed." But political economists ignoring individuals tells us through their distinguished exponent, Roscher, that:

"It is, of course, possible that the laborers which have been thus rendered unnecessary should remain idle for the future, but it is not at all probable. Civil society is not ready as a rule to pension off the laborer rendered unnecessary by machines with their full previous wages, and so the laborers are impelled either by necessity or pride to seek out new fields of work."

That is, to compete with actual workers at lower wages. Again, he says:

"Machines have made the relations between master and laborer less changeable and arbitrary, and, therefore, as a rule, morally better, in that they form, on the one hand, a means of bringing troublesome laborers to terms, and on the other compel the capitalist running even in dull times, if they do not want to see their capital invested in machines completely idle, or, indeed, perish by rust, &c. If machines, then, up to the present time have diminished the toil of the human race but little *or not at all*, the reason does not lie in some necessity of nature, but in the social imperfections of man."

Exactly; and because of the growing conviction in this sage conclusion has arisen the ever-growing and wider-spreading demand for lessening the number of hours of toil in spite of the "dismal science" which but tabulates "the social imperfection of man," and thereby lessening the number of the superfluous, increasing both consumptive and productive power, thus raising the standard of comfort and wages. Yet the above from Roscher is all the crumbs of comfort the "learned professors" have to offer the toiler.

Where division had separated labor, machinery unites the different functions, but often by rendering the human machine superfluous. Division of labor isolated workmen and created a demand for parcellaire labor; machinery increases production by substituting muscles of steel, but in the displacement of workers injures production by curtailing consumption. The one increases the demand for labor, even while depreciating its value, for its

market is limited; the other lessens the demand by displacing it, and find the market over-stocked. "Necessity is the mother of invention," and this has been strikingly illustrated in many a protracted local "strike" for wages, where lawless necessity has invoked genius to furnish more docile and tireless producers of wealth, for which society proffers a pension, not seeing that under-consumption is augmented!

Machinery is the symbol of human genius—its incarnation in material form—for the machine is but a more complicated tool, the mighty weapon with which nature is assailed for man's benefit; and, however great the destruction, however piercing the cries of its victims, it has become a fact, an indispensable factor in social progress, and cannot be stopped. To oppose it is to resist the increase of production; to demand a cessation of the increase of wealth wrung from reluctant nature; to assert that waste rather than economy in labor should be our object; to insist that the privilege of toiling for another upon his own terms is the chief end of the wage-worker's existence; to picture a millennium wherein labor is not saved by the use of improved appliances and tools, and production shall be limited to the primitive capacity of brute force. The true remedy lies in the increase of consumption rather than in formulating "natural laws" based on "the social imperfection of man," that thereby an indefinite increase of production would find ready demand. Between the upper and nether mill-stone of division of labor and machinery—isolation and concentration—victims must necessarily fall.

The demand for new labor, following increased production, is for unskilled not for artisans, for machine tenders, and the inducement, instead of being new wants and a higher standard of comfort and decency, is that of "necessity or pride."

But, again, the remedy can only be sought in the removal of the inequitable conditions which restrict industrial activity, and the most peaceful, that which is most in accord with the lines of progress, that which will tend to raise the race to a higher plane and prepare them for a harmonious industrial evolution out of the slough of poverty—in a word, the most practical in plan and far-reaching in result is the inauguration of the short-time movement.

No one who has lived in or carefully inspected a factory town but what has been struck with the displacement of labor, and its effect upon the workman's family. Reduced to an inferior position by machinery subdividing trades, restricted to a narrower scope of activity, where his skill is only valued in the routine task daily set before him, and with wages lowered by competition with iron and steel muscles, he is obliged to eke out a paltry living by competing also with his own flesh and blood; to witness the lash of stern necessity driving his wife to premature age and nervous exhaustion by double toil as mill-hand and house-keeper, and his children often robbed of childhood to garner wherewith he may barely subsist; instead of a protector to his fading wife and the outraged childhood of his offspring, to be condemned to be dependent upon them for what is often, necessarily, but an animal existence, and in his despair wonder if God still liveth! "Necessity" they know, but "pride" is too often extinguished in the struggle. But I forbear, for this is human misery, and political economy is only concerned in *national* wealth and *average* prosperity.

We have seen that through division of labor and machinery production has been largely augmented, but that, according to political economists, labor has no command over the conditions which limit its free action. This brings us to our last point.

BUSINESS INTERESTS DEMAND IT.—Should not these changed conditions of our industrial system, arising from the rapid development of mechanical appliance beyond consumptive capacity, be labor-saving to the producer as well as to society? Even political economists recognize the evil, but their rules prevent a departure from well-worn ruts. Social economists propose to meet it by such efforts as will not only preserve but increase what comfort has heretofore rendered it indecent to be without. For just as much as productive capacity is limited by restricted consumption, just so far are the possibilities of what may well be a fabulous increase in business retarded. To do this less hours of daily toil are imperative. The lessening of the hours of labor means less idle hands, more persons profitably employed, and, hence, augmented consumption of labor products. By increasing the number of employed an increased demand will augment supply, overproduction checked, the home market enlarged, and with every added demand for labor wages rise.

In the manufacture of textile fabrics one girl can do to-day what two generations ago would have required the united labor of 100 persons. It is true great social advantage has been derived from cheapening the product, but to those forced out of work and penniless even cheap goods are often unattainable. The boot and shoe industry, to take one example, shows that sixty years ago shoemaking was exclusively limited to men, whose average production was 200 pairs a year. Forty years ago women and children were employed, and the use of machinery increased the capacity of each hand to 450 pairs a year. Thirty years ago it had increased to 579 pairs, and ten years ago to 2,593 pairs. In connection with this the following statistics from the Massachusetts State Census are very suggestive:

BOOT AND SHOE INDUSTRY.

	1845	1855	1865
Establishments	206
Capital invested	\$10,322,599
Value stock	36,418,845
No. of hands	45,877	77,827	52,821
Value goods	\$14,799,140	\$37,501,725	56,113,987
No. of pairs	20,896,312	45,066,828	31,870,581

	1875	1885
Establishments	1,461	2,366
Capital invested	\$18,692,864	\$34,314,000
Value stock	54,976,504	70,178,000
No. of hands	48,090	64,658
Value goods	89,375,729	114,729,000
No. of pairs	59,762,866	

The census for 1885 has not yet been published, but the above figures for the last decade are given by the Chief of the Bureau as "very nearly correct," except the number of pairs which had not been tabulated. In 1845 the number of hands employed, 45,877, produced 20,896,312 pairs; in 1875 the number of hands employed, 48,090, produced 59,762,866 pairs. In thirty years the total production had about trebled, while the number of persons employed is but slightly in excess of that of 1845, and far below the number employed in 1855. Again, the number employed in 1885 is less than that of thirty years before. From 1865 to 1885 establishments increased from 206 to 2,366. Investigation of the table given shows that establishments have increased eleven-fold; capital invested, 1865 to 1885, more than three-fold; value of stock used in same period nearly doubled; value of goods made in same period more than doubled; yet the number of persons employed has but slightly increased. It will also be seen that the number of pairs made has not increased in any like ratio, though if the census could give the number of poorly-clad feet the exhibit might be more startling. The conquest of man over nature is constantly augmenting in results, but capital increases faster than business returns; but the question whether the people

are in like measure benefited leads to serious thought.

Are peace and contentment in the worker's humble "home" more promptly realized? Is their inalienable right to life and the pursuit of happiness easier gratified. Are the pangs of hunger more readily alleviated, or the hunger of the mind in aught increased? Are the necessities of life readier attained, or do privation and poverty remain, and still more distinctly marked, as before this vast increase in "national wealth and prosperity?" Has not what improvement exists in our age in the material condition of the toiler directly followed from the additional leisure acquired in the reduction of the hours our fathers were employed, rather than from any other one source whatever?

In the boot and shoe industry production has increased, capital swelled by absorption of profits, but where is the *shoemaker*? The trade is parceled out into sixty-four subdivisions, necessary to the production of one shoe, and the poor drudge employed, while only the sixty-fourth of a shoemaker, finds his speed increased and his nervous vitality more quickly exhausted by the requirements of the machine of which he has become but an adjunct. Well has W. G. Moody, in commenting on the old-time shoemaker, said: "He is literally 'strapped;' he has lost his 'last,' his 'awl' is gone, and he must henceforth 'peg' away at something else." But wherever he may go, whatever trade he may seek to crawl into, he will find the tireless metal muscles there before him! By increasing opportunities we not only create new wants and the means to gratify them, but in the almost endless possibilities thus given to production, the wheels of business would revolve more rapidly and without grinding human lives to augment what a near-sighted policy alone can regard as prosperity.

The great industrial revolution from the

militant age which we are passing through, the change of human activity from warlike to industrial pursuits, which constitutes the essential characteristics of our civilization and the sole guarantee of its peaceful evolution, and the social welfare of the great body politic which forms the foundation of a true democratic state, alike urge the necessity of this world-wide movement. The determination upon the part of the organized workers to mainly depend on their own efforts is a spark from the altar of progress. Often blind and incoherent in its cries, industry at last recognizes that the movement is a social and economic one, and turning from the false political guides who have so long betrayed it, it rises in its might, but clothed in garments of peace, and asserts its unalterable determination to achieve for humanity the

upward and onward social development which the history and the philosophy of the short-time day alike pledge as a milestone in social progress. With all the faith, but without the cynicism, of Carlyle, awakened industry begins to translate its yearnings into articulate speech, and cries: "There must be a *new* world if there is to be *any* world at all. That human things in our Europe can ever return to the old sorry routine, and proceed with any steadiness or continuance there—this small hope is not now a tenable one. These days of universal death must be days of universal new birth, if the ruin is not to be total and final! It is a time to make the dullest man consider and ask himself, Whence he came? Whither he is bound? A veritable NEW ERA to the foolish as well as to the wise."



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